

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
THE BIOLOGICAL LABORATORIES  
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CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

December 27, 1957

Dr. Arthur Kornberg  
Department of Microbiology  
Washington Univ. School of Medicine  
St. Louis 10, Missouri

*Answered  
by hand*

Dear Arthur:

I am returning your manuscripts under separate cover, having read them with the deepest interest. There is no doubt in my mind of the profound importance of the work you report. It is certainly an exciting experience to read a detailed report of this degree of significance after having had to review a good many rather mediocre papers for the JBC during the last year. I certainly think that this is outstanding, and of course it opens up immense vistas for future work. I knew the general outlines from your lectures in Boston last year, but I find it even more impressive on examining the full details.

As to the comments offered by the editor who criticized your manuscript (who obviously consulted two or three referees also), there are many of them that I do not feel qualified to judge. However, it is my own personal conviction that these comments are offered quite without malice, and simply in the belief that every paper submitted to the JBC deserves a very thorough going over. I had a chance to talk with Dr. Vickery about this. He had not seen the correspondence or had anything to do with handling the manuscript or correspondence himself, but when he looked it up he expressed the opinion that this letter was no tougher than many which they send out every year. He also expressed the opinion that the editor who prepared the letter would have said the same things to you, even more bluntly, if he had been discussing the matter with you in personal conversation. Personally, however, I must say that I never would have passed the passage referring to "banalities". This is not only rude but is also not in the least a fair ~~discussion~~ of the passages, in my opinion. In general I think your reply to your critic is quite reasonable in tone. I hesitate to express too positive a view about these matters, since I have no official responsibility whatever as to the way in which these manuscripts are handled. I hope, however, that the differences of opinion about them can be resolved rapidly, since this is certainly very important work and it ought to be made available to the scientific world without undue delay. I am very glad indeed to have had a chance to read it before publication.

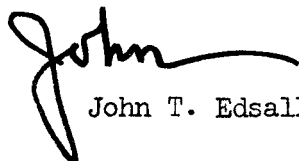
*characterization*

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I am keeping the copy of the correspondence by the editors and yourself, in case the New Haven office raises any questions with me about this. In any case I feel very strongly, as the future editor of the JBC, that I should be extremely disappointed if work of this sort were not to appear in the Journal but were to be sent somewhere else.

With all good wishes for the new year,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John T. Edsall

JTE/llw